

For immediate release

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Mayor, Councilmember Paley, Partners Unveil New Program to Provide Discounted Rain Barrels

Mayor Michael B. Coleman, Councilmember Eileen Paley, representatives from Greif, Inc. and Franklin Soil & Water announced the launch of the Columbus GreenSpot Backyard Conservation Program today at the Marion Franklin Community Recreation Center. The rain barrels offered through Mayor Coleman's GreenSpot Backyard Conservation Program, will be available for \$45, less than one third of the \$139 retail price. Residents will be required to first register their home as a GreenSpot and then either attend one of 14 workshops throughout July, August and September or pass an online quiz at www.ColumbusRainBarrels.org.

"Through this public-private partnership it will be even easier for our residents to get green, saving money and the environment," Mayor Coleman said. "A rain barrel is an easy way to get water for yards and gardens, and the best part is, the water is free."

Columbus residents participating in the program will become familiar with the effects of urban runoff and learn about the tools to manage storm water issues. By using a rain barrel, households will recharge the ground water supply, decrease the impact of runoff to streams, and save money by reducing the use of treated tap water to water their gardens.

"A rain barrel connected to a downspout is a great way to help the environment and improve household finances," said Councilmember Paley. "They will keep excess storm water out of the sanitary sewer system and provide a free source of water for plants and gardens. Rain barrels reduce a family's demand for treated tap water, thus lowering your water bill."

EarthMinded, a subsidiary of Greif, Inc., headquartered in Central Ohio, has partnered with the City of Columbus and is providing RainStations to the city at the discounted rate as part of its commitment to worldwide water conservation and education. The EarthMinded RainStation rain barrel for sale through the program connects to downspouts and automatically collects runoff water from a house's roof. It includes everything needed for installation, has a 65-gallon capacity, and is easily winterized. Technical assistance is also available to participants.

"We're proud to be part of the Columbus GreenSpot Backyard Conservation program," said Scott Griffin, vice president of Sustainability for Greif. "Initiatives such as this play a critical role in educating and inspiring people to take action and we are very happy to be a part of this change. The management of water is a serious issue, and in Central Ohio we've all experienced both sides of it, from drought to deluge. EarthMinded rain barrels help ease the stress on our water system when it rains by capturing and storing the water pouring through the downspouts."

The city has contracted with Franklin Soil & Water to administer the program and partner with local non-profit watershed groups to conduct the educational workshops.

“The City of Columbus is rich in water resources from small creeks in wooded ravines, accessible rivers and reservoirs,” said Jennifer Fish, Executive Director of Franklin Soil and Water. “Conserving and protecting these resources is important to our community for drinking water, recreation and wildlife; this is important to our identity and our economy.”

The workshop options include:

July 14, 6:30PM, Eastpointe Christian Church, 745 N. Waggoner Rd

July 16, 10:30AM, Hilltop Library, 511 S. Hague Ave.

July 21, 6:30PM, Blendon Woods Metro Park, Sycamore Shelter, 4265 E. Dublin-Granville Rd.

July 28, 6:30PM, Whetstone Library, 3909 N. High St.

July 28, 6:30PM, Southeast Library, 3980 S. Hamilton Rd.

July 30, 10:30AM, Big Walnut Shelter House, 5000 E. Livingston

August 4, 6:30PM, Karl Road Library, 5590 Karl Rd.

August 6, 10:30AM, Northern Lights Library, 4093 Cleveland Ave.

August 11, 6:30PM, South High Library, 3540 S. High St.

August 13, 10:30AM, Northside Library, 1423 N. High St.

August 18, 6:30PM, Shepard Library, 790 N Nelson Rd.

August 20, 10:30AM, Driving Park Library, 1566 E. Livingston Ave.

August 25, 6:30PM, Whetstone Library, 3909 N. High St.

September 1, 6:30PM, Northwest Library, 2280 Hard Rd.

Residents need to send in payment of \$45, with a limit of one per household, and register for a workshop in order to receive the RainStation, or orders can be made online. For more information about the program, call 614-486-9613 or visit www.ColumbusRainBarrels.org.

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